

Article - Natural Resources

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§8-722.

(a) This section applies only to abandoned vessels as defined in § 8-721 of this subtitle.

(b) Subject to the provisions of this section, a landowner, a landowner's lessee, or a landowner's agent may acquire title to any abandoned vessel on the landowner's land or the water immediately adjacent to the landowner's land. Acquisition of title divests any other person of any interest in the vessel.

(c) (1) If a vessel has a boat number or other means of identifying the vessel's owner, the person desiring to acquire title, if possible, shall secure the owner's last known address, and the lienholder, if any, appearing on the Department's records. The person shall notify this owner and the lienholder by registered letter to the last known address that, if ownership is not claimed and the vessel removed within 30 days, the person will apply for title to the vessel in the person's name. If any vessel's owner or lienholder cannot be identified or address ascertained from the Department's records, it is not necessary to send the letter.

(2) The person desiring to acquire title also shall place a notice in a newspaper of general circulation published in the county where the vessel is located, describing the vessel, the vessel's location, and any identifying number. The person shall state in the notice that, if the vessel is not claimed and removed within 30 days after the publication date of the paper, the person will apply for title to the vessel in the person's name.

(3) At the end of the 30-day period the person shall apply to the Department for title to the vessel in the person's name on forms the Department approves accompanied by the following affidavits:

(i) A statement that the vessel is an abandoned vessel as defined in § 8-721 of this subtitle;

(ii) Proof the registered letter was mailed at least 30 days before application or a detailed explanation of the unsuccessful steps taken to identify the owner or lienholder and secure the owner's or lienholder's address;

(iii) Proof a notice was printed in a newspaper as required in paragraph (2) of this subsection;

- (iv) A clear and accurate photograph of the vessel; and
- (v) A tracing or certification of the hull identification number.

(4) Upon receipt of the material required in paragraph (3) of this subsection and payment of any fees and taxes due, the Department shall issue title to the vessel to the applicant.

(5) The applicant shall bear any cost incurred in receiving title to a vessel under this section.

(6) After receiving title, if the applicant destroys or otherwise disposes of the vessel, the applicant shall report this information to the Department within 15 days giving every detail.

(7) The Department may receive title to any abandoned vessel on the waters of the State or on any land owned by the State or any political subdivisions by proceeding in the same manner a property owner does as set forth in this section.

(d) A person may not obtain or attempt to obtain title to a vessel under the provisions of this section through any fraudulent means.

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